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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 JERUSALEM 001561

SIPDIS

NEA FOR FRONT OFFICE AND IPA; NSC FOR SHAPIRO/KUMAR; JOINT
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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PBTS](#) [PREL](#) [KPAL](#) [KWBG](#) [IS](#)
SUBJECT: UPDATE ON SETTLEMENT CONSTRUCTION PROJECTS

REF: A. 08 JERUSALEM 1539
[1](#)B. JERUSALEM 847
[1](#)C. JERUSALEM 859
[1](#)D. JERUSALEM 1402
[1](#)E. 08 JERUSALEM 347

Classified By: Deputy Principal Officer Greg Marchese
for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

[1](#)1. (U) Summary. Ongoing construction was observed at settlement sites ranging from established blocs inside the separation barrier to Jordan Valley farms during observation trips conducted by PolOff August 21-25. Near Givat Zeev, just north of Jerusalem, construction continues on 300 additional housing units. Caravans remain at the Kochav Yaakov settlement. End summary.

Givat Zeev

[1](#)2. (C) In an August 24 meeting with PolOff, Hanoch Kas, manager of Nofei Israel Ltd., the principal developer of the Givat Zeev Hahadasha settlement northwest of Givat Zeev, said that 400 new units were recently completed, and construction is underway on another 300 units scheduled for completion over the next two years. According to Kas, all 700 units have gained proper approvals. According to his firm's promotional video, an additional 1,200 units are planned for construction in the second phase, "Hahadasha B". Currently, he noted, Givat Zeev Hahadasha is uninhabited, but two hundred families are expected to move into the settlement in January.

[1](#)3. (C) In addition, Nofei Israel has purchased 140 dunams of land adjacent to Hahadasha from private Israeli owners, who originally purchased the lands from Arabs. Kas noted that his firm is waiting for the GOI to approve permits for the construction of 500 housing units on those parcels, and blamed U.S. pressure for his inability to expedite the permits. (Note: Givat Zeev is one of the largest settlement blocs, just north of Jerusalem over the Green Line but west of the separation barrier. The Givat Zeev Hahadasha building project was approved March 2008 by the Olmert administration.)

Nof Zion

[1](#)4. (U) Kas said his firm has stopped construction at its Nof Zion project in East Jerusalem, s Jabel Mukaber neighborhood. It completed 50 of 334 planned units, having failed to find buyers for anymore (Ref C). The project is now up for sale, but no serious buyers have come forward to date. "People don,t want to live near Arabs," Kas explained, "they want to live in Givat Zeev." Those settlers moving into East Jerusalem, Kas argued, are doing so for political reasons.

15. (U) Rabbi Mordechai Rabinovitch of Kochav Yaakov, a settlement east of the separation barrier and south-east of Ramallah, populated mainly by observant Jewish immigrants from Europe and the Americas, confirmed to PolOff that twelve caravans were recently erected. PolOff independently confirmed the existence of the caravans, which lie on what NGO Yesh Din maintains is Palestinian land (Ref D). Despite the area's designation as a closed military zone following a Yesh Din petition to the High Court, recent immigrants have no plans to move, according to Rabinovitch.

Jordan Valley: Maskiyyot, Rotem, and Mehola

16. (C) PolOff toured the Jordan Valley on 25 Aug and observed three new caravans at Maskiyyot, a Northern Jordan Valley settlement initially established as a pre-military academy (Ref E). Three new caravans were erected during the last few months, according to Fathi Khdairat of Jordan Valley Solidarity. PolOff also observed a bulldozer leveling an area outside the current border fence of Maskiyyot. According to David El Hayani, head of the Jordan Valley Regional Council, ten families currently live in Maskiyyot, and plans exist for construction of twenty new houses in the settlement for former residents of the Gaza settlement Shirat Hayam. El Hayani said the plans for Maskiyyot were approved under the Olmert administration.

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17. (C) El Hayani explained to PolOff that he is authorized to approve construction of housing in Jordan Valley settlements up to the number of units permitted by GOI-approved plans. In the Jordan Valley settlement of Yafit, the approved plan allows for 120 housing units. Eighty families currently reside in Yafit, El Hayani said, and he can approve construction of 40 additional units. El Hayani added that ten new houses were built last year, but they are currently vacant. Despite active marketing for new residents to move to the Jordan Valley, he said, people are not interested, because the area is perceived as too distant from the metropolitan centers of Tel Aviv and Jerusalem.

18. (C) According to Daphna Banai of Machsom Watch, a new house was recently constructed outside the current fenced area of Rotem, another Northern Jordan Valley settlement. PolOff confirmed the existence of the house during a road recce. PolOff also observed the continuing construction of six new caravans, some of which are already completed, at Mehola, the farthest northern settlement within the Jordan Valley.
WALLES